



**Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission
Defending Freedoms Project
Prisoner List**

AZERBAIJAN



Avaz Zeynalli is the editor in chief and founder of the *Xural* newspaper. He was arrested on October 28th 2011 and accused of trying to extort money from an Azerbaijani MP, Gular Ahjmadova, who has since been charged with involvement in a corruption scam. He has been in detention ever since. His arrest came a week after he wrote an article criticizing the country's President. Two days later, a court sanctioned the confiscation of the newspaper's property and it was then sold without Zeynalli's knowledge. On

12th March 2013, he was sentenced to nine years in prison on charges of extortion and tax evasion, after a trial in which no evidence substantiating those charges was ever presented to the court.



Hilal Mammedov (born 1959) is a journalist and human rights activist, speaking up for minority groups in Azerbaijan. He is the chief editor of the Baku-based newspaper "Tolyshi Sado" (The Voice of Talysh), printed in Azerbaijan's minority language, Talysh. He was also head of a committee fighting to defend a well-known Talysh scientist and human rights activist who was imprisoned for 10 years on spying charges and eventually died in prison. Having already been arrested in 2008 and charged with spying for Iran, Hilal Mammedov was apprehended once again on June 21st, 2012, accused of possession of illegal drugs. He now

faces a prison sentence of three to 12 years. His family insists he has never used any such drugs and the arrest was politically motivated. Azerbaijani authorities repeatedly deny that there are any political prisoners in the country.

BAHRAIN



Mahdi 'Issa Mahdi Abu Dheeb (Adopted by Representative Hank Johnson (D-GA)) is the former vice-president of the Bahrain Teacher's Association (BTA). He was arrested with several other board members of the BTA in connection with the BTA's call for strikes. While his colleagues were released, he was brought to trial before a military court on 15 June on charges that include "inciting hatred towards the regime," "calling to overthrow and change the regime by force," "calling on parents not to send their children to school," and "calling on teachers to

stop working and participate in strikes and demonstrations." He has been tortured and ill-treated.

Ibrahim Sharif, Hassan Mshaima, Abdel-Wahab Hussain, Abdel-Jalil al-Singace, Abdulhadi al-Khawaja, Salah al-Khawaja, Sa'eed Mirza al-Nuri and Mohamed Habib al-Miqdad are among fourteen opposition activists in Bahrain serving prison sentences handed down by a military court following anti-government protests in February and March 2011. They were not given fair trials and some of them reportedly were tortured. They are prisoners of conscience, detained solely for peacefully expressing their opinions and their activism. The 14 activists were arrested between 17 March and 9 April 2011. In most cases, they were arrested in the middle of the night by several security officers who raided their houses and took them to an unknown location, where they were held incommunicado for weeks. In most cases, they were only allowed to see their lawyers and family during the first court hearing in May 2011. Many of the 14 defendants alleged they were tortured during their first days of detention when they were being interrogated by officers from the National Security Agency (NSA), an investigating authority associated with the Ministry of Interior. Many of them were then held incommunicado for weeks. Some of the 14 were allowed to see their lawyers during questioning by the Military Prosecutor ahead of the trial, but they were not allowed to see their lawyers during NSA interrogations just after they were arrested.



Abdulhadi al-Khawaja (51) has been a well-known human rights defender for more than twenty years. Until February 2011, Mr. al-Khawaja worked as a regional coordinator for the international organization Front Line Defenders. Because of his tireless advocacy for peaceful reform in Bahrain, Mr. al-Khawaja has faced a long history of arrests and assaults.

Just before his current detention, Mr. al-Khawaja had publicly criticized the regime's brutal response to the anti-government protests in Bahrain. Early on April 9, 2011, fifteen masked men stormed into Mr. al-Khawaja's daughter's apartment, breaking down the door with a sledgehammer. The masked men did not produce identification or an arrest warrant. The men beat Mr. al-Khawaja until he lost consciousness and dragged him down the stairs by his neck. He was taken into custody along with his two sons-in-law. Authorities held him *incommunicado* for some weeks, in which time they tortured him physically and mentally.

On May 8, 2011, Mr. al-Khawaja's trial began before the National Safety Court – a military tribunal. He was prosecuted along with a diverse set of twenty other individuals. Despite the lack of evidence against him, Mr. al-Khawaja was charged and convicted with financing and participating in terrorism to overthrow the government, as well as spying for a foreign country. On June 22, 2011, he was sentenced to life imprisonment. On April 2, 2012, the Bahraini Court of Cassation began to review the verdicts of Mr. al-Khawaja and thirteen other defendants charged in relation to the 2011 anti-government protests. Mr. al-Khawaja's lawyer requested that he be released on bail pending the court's decision; however, the request was denied. On April 30, 2012, the Court of Cassation ordered a retrial in civilian court and refused to release Mr. al-Khawaja on bail pending the trial. On September 4, 2012, a Bahraini appeals court upheld his sentence of life in prison. On January 7, 2013, Bahrain's highest appeals court upheld Mr. al-Khawaja's conviction and life sentence.

Mr. al-Khawaja has been subjected to deplorable treatment during his detention. Because of the beatings he endured from security agents, he suffered four fractures to his face, requiring a four hour surgery to repair his jaw. Security forces are also subjecting Mr. al-Khawaja to other forms of inhumane treatment, such as attempted sexual assault and psychological torture. On February 8, 2012, Mr. al-Khawaja began a hunger strike to protest his wrongful detention and treatment in prison. He ended his hunger strike after 110 days on May 30, 2012. During his hunger strike, Mr. al-Khawaja's health deteriorated and he reportedly lost 22 pounds.



Naji Fateel, 39, is a board member of the Bahrain Youth Society for Human Rights (BYSHR) a blogger and prolific tweeter, reporting on human rights violations. During marches and protests in villages he has given speeches about human rights and encouraged people to document and monitor violations. Naji Fateel was arrested without warrant at dawn at his home in the village of Bani Jamra, northwestern Bahrain. The house was raided by 12 plain clothed police officers who searched the house and took away with them his daughter's laptop, his camera and phones. The family home was surrounded by riot police during the raid. No reason for his arrest was given and he was tortured and otherwise ill-treated before he was transferred to Dry Dock Prison on 5 May 2013.

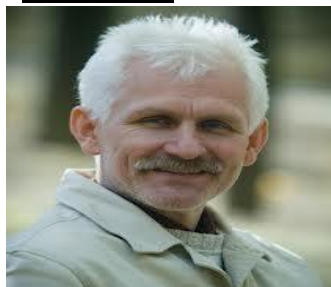
Naji Fateel has been arrested and tortured several times. He suffers from back injuries sustained during torture in 2007 and walks aided with a stick. On 14 February 2012 - the first anniversary of mass protests in Bahrain – he was arrested after being caught in teargas fired by police to break up crowds of people marching towards Pearl Roundabout, where protestors intended to gather. He was released on bail on 17 April 2012.



Nabeel Rajab (m) (adopted by Representative Jim McGovern (D-MA)): Nabeel Rajab, a prominent Bahraini human rights activist, was sentenced to three years' imprisonment on 16 August 2012 for taking part in anti-government protests. He has been convicted on charges of "illegal gathering" and "disturbing public order" for calling for and taking part in demonstrations in Manama without prior notification on 12 January, 6 February and 31 March. During the protest, he was assaulted by riot police who punched him several times in the face, head

and back. He said: "I fell on the ground but they continued to beat me – they even stamped on me and kicked me." Nabeel Rajab's latest conviction and sentence were handed down while he was already serving a three-month jail sentence in a separate case in relation to a tweet he posted. He is held in al-Jaw prison.

BELARUS



Ales Bialiatski (m), a prominent Belarusian human-rights defender and chair of the Human Rights Center, Viasna, was arrested in central Minsk, Belarus, on 4 August 2011. On 24 November 2011, he was imprisoned for four-and-a-half years on charges of "concealment of income on a large scale."



Mikalai Statkevich, 56, is a politician and former presidential candidate, who has been wrongfully detained since 2010 as a result of his peaceful struggle for free and fair elections in Belarus. Prior to his arrest, Mr. Statkevich played an active role in Belarus's pro-democracy political opposition. Mr. Statkevich served as the head of the Belarusian Social Democratic Party and Free Belarus, a political opposition coalition in Belarus. In 2010, Mr. Statkevich ran as an opposition presidential candidate. Following the elections, on December 19, 2010, Mr. Statkevich joined

thousands of protesters peacefully demonstrating against election fraud in downtown Minsk. Mr. Statkevich was one of hundreds of protesters arrested when police violently dispersed the protest. Following his arrest, he was placed in a KGB pre-trial prison, and later charged under Article 293.1 of the Criminal Code for “organizing mass disorder”. On May 26, 2011, the Leninski District Court of Minsk sentenced Mr. Statkevich to six years imprisonment in a high security penal colony. At trial, no proof of violent attacks during the demonstration was presented.

At various times during his detention, Mr. Stratkevich’s communication with his family has been restricted and he has been threatened with new sanctions for violating prison rules. Mr. Stratkevich’s wife, Maryna Adamovich, attributes the tough measures against her husband to his refusal to apply for a pardon in protest of his innocence.



Anton Suryapin (m) is a student at Belarus State Journalism School imprisoned for posting online photographs of teddy bears carrying placards in support of freedom of expression. The teddy bear stunt was organized by a Swedish advertising company to draw attention to the repression of freedom of speech in Belarus. The company parachuted the teddy bears out of an airplane over Belarusian air space. The organizers claim that Suryapin had nothing to do with the stunt and had no prior

knowledge of it. He was arrested on 13 July 2012 and subsequently charged with “organizing illegal migration.” After a month in prison, he was released on bail pending trial. He faces a sentence of up to seven years in prison. His bail conditions state he cannot leave his home city of Slutsk, south of Minsk, without permission from the KGB, and he must not disclose any information in relation to the investigation.

BURMA



DR. TUN AUNG (m) – In 2012, Dr. Tun Aung, a medical doctor and family man, attempted to calm a rioting crowd at a mosque in his hometown of Maungdaw, in Rakhine state of Myanmar, having been summoned by the police to help calm the crowd because he was the Chairman of the Islamic Religious Affairs Council in Maungdaw. Eyewitness accounts report that Dr. Tun Aung was attempting to pacify the crowd by telling them that the government was setting up an investigation of the killings. Unfortunately, the crowd would not listen. Three days later, he was offered a ride home by an immigration officer, but was instead detained and held incommunicado for

several months. He was subsequently charged in connection with the riots in Rakhine state, put on trial and denied the right to appoint a lawyer of his choice or meet with the court appointed lawyer in private, and sentenced to 11 years’ imprisonment in the second half of 2012. This sentence has since been increased to 17 years. Dr. Tun Aung is being held in Sittwe Prison, over 105 miles away from his hometown. As such, his family must travel for a day or more to make one 20 minute prison visit.

CHINA



Liu Xianbin (m) is a long-time political dissident, organizer of the China Democracy Party, and member of an “illegal” Protestant house church. He is also a blogger using the pen name Wan Xianming. He is originally from Suining, in southwest China’s Sichuan province. Liu was also one of the original signers of the Charter 08 document that called for constitutional

reforms, democracy, and human rights, including the freedom of religion and belief. Liu was an active participant in the 1989 Tiananmen Square democracy movement. After the protests were suppressed, Liu continued to call for democracy and was arrested by Beijing police on 15 April 1991 and held in Beijing's infamous Qincheng prison. On 28 December 1992, he was convicted by the Beijing Intermediate People's Court for "counter-revolutionary incitement" and sentenced to prison for two-and-a-half years with a one-year deprivation of political rights. Released in October 1993 after serving his full term, Liu was sentenced again by the Suining Intermediate People's Court to a thirteen-year prison term for "inciting subversion of state power," with a three-year deprivation of political rights. He was released on 6 November 2008. From April 2010 to February 2010, Liu submitted to overseas websites and magazines a number of articles critical of the Chinese Communist authorities on issues ranging from corruption, abuses of power, and human rights violations. On 28 June 2010, Liu was detained, and on 15 March 2011, the Suining Intermediate People's Court convicted Liu of "inciting subversion of state power" and sentenced him to a ten-year prison term, with deprivation of political rights for two years and four months. He remains in jail.



Dr. Liu Xiaobo is a Chinese scholar and democracy activist who was sentenced to 11 years in prison for inciting subversion on December 25, 2009. On October 8, 2010, the Norwegian Nobel Committee awarded Dr. Liu the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize "in recognition of his long and non-violent struggle for fundamental human rights in China." Shortly after the announcement, Chinese authorities isolated Dr. Liu's wife, Liu Xia, from her supporters, the media, and foreign diplomats; she remains under house arrest without charge.

The Chinese government previously detained Dr. Liu for his peaceful activities on three occasions, including during the crackdown following the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests. In 2008, Dr. Liu was one of the primary drafters of Charter '08, a political manifesto that calls for peaceful democratic reform and respect for the rule of law and human rights in China. The Chinese government detained Dr. Liu on December 8, 2008—two days before the official release of Charter '08. The government held Dr. Liu at an unknown location without access to a lawyer for nearly six months and then formally arrested him on June 23, 2009.

On December 23, 2009, Dr. Liu was tried for "inciting subversion." His wife, Liu Xia, and foreign diplomats and journalists were not allowed to attend the trial. The proceeding lasted only two hours and the court limited Dr. Liu's lawyers to 14 minutes in which to defend against the charges. On December 25, 2009, the court sentenced Dr. Liu to 11 years in prison and two years' deprivation of political rights. In the verdict, Dr. Liu's participation in the production of pro-democracy essays, including Charter 08, was cited as evidence against him. (Freedom Now, RWB, Freedom Now)



Chen Zhenping (f) is a Falun Gong practitioner **who** was detained in August 2008 for "using a heretical organization to subvert the law." She is currently serving an eight-year prison sentence in Henan Provincial Women's prison. Repeated attempts by her lawyer to visit her since her imprisonment have all been blocked by the authorities. Her family has not been able to see her since March 2009. She has been subjected to regular beatings, been forcibly injected with drugs, and given electric shocks on sensitive parts of her body. She remains at serious risk of further torture or ill-treatment.



Guo Quan (Kwo-kwan) (m) has been in prison since 2008 under a ten-year sentence for calling for political reform. In 2008, Guo participated in and played a leading role in a campaign to protect the rights of demobilized military officers. He also published criticism about the government's response to the Sichuan

earthquake and about the violation of international human rights. On 13 November 2008, he was taken into custody by Nanjing police, who also raided his home, where Guo and his wife hosted regular Protestant “house church” activities. His family was informed that he was being criminally detained on suspicion of “inciting subversion of state power.” On 10 June 2009, Guo’s case was recorded on the docket of the Suqian Municipal Intermediate People’s Court in Jiangsu province, and his trial was held on 7 August 2009. On 16 October 2009, the court convicted Guo of “subversion of state power” and sentenced him to a ten-year prison term. Guo’s wife and son fled to the United States on 23 January 2012, where they are appealing for international help in winning his early release.



Alimujiang Yimiti (a-lim-John Yee-me-tea) (m) is a Uyghur Christian from Xinjiang Province now serving a fifteen-year prison term. His home is in Urumqi, capital of Xinjiang, and he and his wife have two young sons. While working at a British agri-food company, Alimujiang was the leader of a house church in the city of Kashgar. On 13 September 2007, the Kashgar Religious Affairs Bureau ruled that “Alimujiang Yimiti since 2002 has illegally engaged in religious infiltration under the guise of work, spreading Christianity among the Uyghur people, distributing Christian propaganda and growing [the number of] Christian believers.”

On 12 January 2008, the Kashgar police criminally detained Alimujiang on “suspicion of inciting subversion of state power” and “leaking state secrets overseas.” He was formally arrested on those charges on 20 February 2008. On 12 September 2008, the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention ruled in its No. 28 document that Alimujiang’s arrest and detention had been arbitrary. In a secret trial on 6 August, the Kashgar Intermediate People’s Court sentenced Alimujiang to fifteen years in prison for the crime of “leaking state secrets to foreigners.” On 16 March 2010, the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region Higher People’s Court, without holding a hearing and barring lawyers from court, upheld the Intermediate Court’s sentence and added a five-year sentence of deprivation of political rights.



Gao Zhisheng (m) (DOB: April 20, 1966) (adopted by Representative Frank Wolf (R-VA)). He is one of the most respected human rights lawyers in China, and has been subjected to enforced disappearance, torture, illegal house arrest and detention as a result of his work. He is currently imprisoned in Shaya county prison in Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region in northwest China, after being sent to prison in December 2011 for apparently violating the conditions of his suspended three-year sentence. Prior to this, his whereabouts had been unknown for almost 20 months. He has been repeatedly tortured since 2006, and continues to be at high risk of further torture.

This award-winning human rights lawyer has handled a number of high-profile human rights cases, including a dispute over government-seized oil fields case in Shaanxi province, Christians in Kashgar in the far western region of Xinjiang, and Falungong practitioners. In November 2005, the Beijing Judicial Bureau ordered his Shengzhi Law Office shut down. On Dec. 22, 2006, Gao was convicted of “inciting subversion of state power,” sentenced to a three-year prison term, with a five-year probation and one-year deprivation of political rights, and released home.

On Sept. 21, 2007, Gao was taken into official custody again. When he was released 50 days later, he wrote “Dark Night, Dark Hood, Kidnapping by Dark Mafia,” (<http://www.freegao.com/2011/07/dark-night-dark-hood-and-kidnapping-by.html>) in which he recounted how he had been tortured, including having toothpicks inserted into his penis. On Jan. 9, 2009, his wife, daughter and son left Beijing and fled to the United States. On Feb. 4, 2009, Gao was taken by Chinese authorities and disappeared into official custody. He suddenly re-appeared on March 27, 2010, under the surveillance of Domestic Security Protection Agents, then disappeared again on April 20.

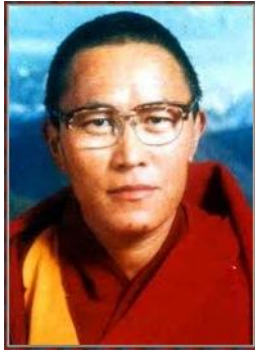
On Jan. 10, 2011, Charles Hutzler of the Associated Press reported in a piece entitled “Missing Chinese lawyer told of abuse” that nearly a year earlier, on April 7, 2010, he had met Gao in a Beijing teahouse for an extended interview during which Gao revealed that during his disappearance he had been held variously in Beijing, Shaanxi province and the far western region of Xinjiang, and described in detail the brutal torture that had been inflicted on him (<http://www.chinaaid.org/2011/01/ap-exclusive-missing-chinese-lawyer.html>). On Dec. 16, 2011, the official Xinhua News Agency reported in a short English-only dispatch that because Gao had violated the terms of his parole, he was being sent back to jail to serve his three-year prison term. He is currently incarcerated in a prison in remote Shaya county in far western Xinjiang. (<http://www.chinaaid.org/2012/01/disappeared-human-rights-lawyer-gao.html>).



Pastor Yang Rongli (Young-ring-lee) (f) has been serving a seven-and-a-half-year prison term since 2009 for leading the 50,000-member Linfen Church in Shaanxi province. Yang is a 1982 graduate of the Linfen Normal College's Chinese department. Because of her excellent academic record, she was retained by the college to teach. She also worked as an editor and reporter. She and her husband, Wang Xiaoguang, were the leaders of the Jindengtai (Golden Lampstand) Church, a house church in Linfen, Shaanxi province. In 1998, they became the church's full-time clergy, and in the following two decades, the church grew to 50,000 members. On 13 September 2009 at 3 a.m., the local Fushan county government dispatched more than 400 police officers and plainclothes police, led by government officials, to the meeting site of the Fushan Christians and the Gospel Shoe Factory, where they brutally beat Christians staying in a dormitory. More than 100 people were seriously injured. On 23 September, armed police surrounded the main Jindengtai church building, and on 25 September, Yang and six other church leaders were arrested while traveling to the provincial capital of Taiyuan to petition the government. On 25 November, the Yaodu District Court convicted Yang and her husband of “illegal occupation of farmland” and “gathering a mob to create a traffic disturbance.” Yang was sentenced to a seven-year prison term and fined 30,000 yuan (US\$4,755); her husband was sentenced to a three-year term and fined 10,000 yuan (US\$1,585).



Zhu Yufu (adopted by Representative Randy Hultgren (R-IL)) is a democracy advocate who reportedly is suffering ill-treatment in prison, one of about 1,295 Chinese citizens known or believed to be detained or imprisoned for exercising his or her human rights under international law. In 1998, he was one of the founders of the unrecognized [Democracy Party of China](#) (DPC). He also founded the "Opposition Party" magazine that carried articles about the DPC. He was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment (and three-year deprivation of political rights) for publishing a poem that directed people to participate in the [2011 Chinese pro-democracy protests](#). Formerly a property worker at the Hangzhou City Shangcheng District Urban Housing Bureau, Zhu was convicted of inciting subversion of state power in 1999 and served five and a half years in prison for founding the "Opposition Party" magazine. After his release in 2006, he spoke out against the torture he had suffered in prison and continued to promote democratization. In 2007 he was detained again after a confrontation with a police officer who was questioning his son, and sentenced to two years in prison for "beating police and hindering public duty." Zhu was taken away by police on 7 March 2011. Officers also searched his home, confiscated two computers and other items. Zhu was criminally detained on suspicion of inciting subversion of state power and formally arrested on the same charge on 11 April 2011.



Tenzin Delek Rinpoche was sentenced to death in 2002 on charges of “inciting Splittism.” Following international pressure, his sentence later was commuted to life. Imprisoned by Chinese authorities for eleven years, he is reported to be in poor health. He is a Tibetan Buddhist Monk who has sought to reestablish Buddhist practice in Tibetan areas of China. He worked with the Dalai Lama in his exile in India, and established Buddhist institutions and promoted social activism in Tibet. In 2002, following a bombing in the Chinese city of Chengdu, he and another monk were arrested on suspicion of involvement in the bombings.



Gendun Choekyi Nyima, the Panchen Lama. The Chinese authorities have held Gendun Choekyi Nyima in a secret location since 1995 when he was six years old, allegedly to keep him safe from “Tibetan Nationalists.” China refuses all requests, both domestic and international, to see Nyima. The Panchen Lama is a high ranking spiritual leader in the Tibetan Buddhist hierarchy and is passed down by reincarnation. The Dalai Lama selected Gendun Choekyi Nyima in 1995 to be the next Panchen Lama, while Chinese authorities decreed Gyaltzen Norbu to be the next. As the Panchen Lama traditionally is held responsible for the selection of the Dalai Lama, The Chinese authorities believe it is important to control the Panchen Lama’s fate.



Bishop James Su Zhimin was arrested in 1996 for unregistered religious activity. He has not been heard from since, despite repeated international inquiries, though he was believed to have been seen in 2003 in a Baoding Hospital. He served as an unregistered Bishop in the city of Baoding in the Chinese province of Hebei. Chinese religious authorities select Bishops over the authority of the Vatican, but Bishop Su recognized only the Catholic Church’s authority in this matter. Chinese authorities took him during a religious procession in 1996. Attempts at identifying or memorializing him or holding public events in his honor have met with hostile police action.



Alimujiang Yimiti has been imprisoned in China since 2008 under charges of “subversion of the national government and endangering national security,” “suspicion of inciting people to secede from China,” and “illegally providing state secrets to foreigners.” He has been sentenced to 15 years in prison on these charges. He is a Uighur Christian businessman who converted from Islam to Christianity and has been actively involved in church activities in Xinjiang. Chinese authorities have accused him of using his business, a food distribution company, as a front to spread Christianity. His sentence has not been reduced on appeal, and in 2013 Chinese prison authorities stopped visits from his family.



Wang Zhiwen has been imprisoned in China since 1999 for his membership in the Falun Gong movement and organizing a protest. He was sentenced to 16 years in prison and four years deprivation of political rights. He is a former engineer in China who became involved in the Falun Gong spiritual movement during the 1990’s when the movement was permitted. After the movement was declared to be illegal, Wang was arrested for his alleged leadership in the Falun Gong, charged with “illegal

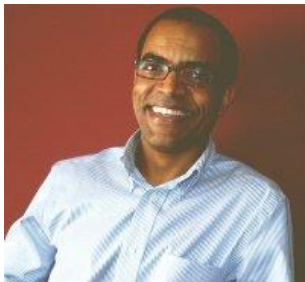
acquisition of state secrets” and crimes related to organizing a “cult.” He has exchanged some limited communication with his family in the United States, but otherwise has not been heard from since. He is believed to be held in the Tianjin Prison in Tianjin City.



Li Chang has been imprisoned in China on charges of “organizing and using a heretical organization to undermine implementation of the law,” “organizing and using a heretical organization to cause death” and “illegally obtaining state secret.” He is serving an 18 year sentence and five years deprivation of political rights. Li Chang is a former Chinese government official who joined the Falun Gong movement during its period of legality in the 1990’s. He is believed to have been a leader of the movement. When Falun Gong was declared to be illegal, he was arrested and is believed to have been forced to confess. He was tried with several other Falun Gong members, including Wang Zhiwen, and sentenced to 25 years imprisonment, later commuted to 18 years. He currently is being held in

Tianjin Prison in Tianjin City.

ERITREA



Dawit Isaac (m, born 1964) is a writer and journalist with dual Swedish and Eritrean nationality, who’s been detained without formal charge in Eritrea since September 2001. He was detained alongside ten other independent journalists and eleven politicians, ostensibly for demanding democratic reforms in a series of letters to president Isayas Afeworki. He is the only Swedish citizen currently being held as a prisoner of conscience. In April 2002, the Committee to Protect Journalists reported that Isaak had been hospitalized after being tortured; the Eritrean government denied that he’d been tortured but refused to allow any visitors. In 2005, he was released for

two days before being re-imprisoned while on his way to hospital. In 2009, four of Sweden’s biggest newspapers featured Isaak’s case on their front pages, and launched a petition for his release, but the Eritrean president dismissed the issue during a TV interview later that year, saying “We will not have any trial and we will not free him.”



Eritrean Patriarch Abune Antonios (m) was deposed by the government in 2006 and placed under house arrest after he protested the Eritrean Department of Religious Affairs’ interference in his church’s affairs. In January 2005, the Patriarch’s annual Nativity message was not broadcast or televised and the Eritrean Holy Synod met on 6-7 August 2005 with the main purpose of removing all executive authority from the Patriarch. He was allowed to officiate at church services but prohibited from having any administrative role in church affairs. Among accusations brought against the Patriarch, were his reluctance to excommunicate 3,000 members of the Medhane Alem, an Orthodox Sunday School movement, and his demands that the government release imprisoned Christians accused of treason. In January 2006, he was officially removed from his position as head of the Eritrean Orthodox Church and spiritual leader of more than two-million persons and placed under house arrest. On 27 May 2007, the government installed Bishop Dioscoros of Mendefera as the new Patriarch. That same day, Abune Antonios was forcibly removed from his residence and transported to an undisclosed location. Since then, he has been prevented from communicating with the outside world and reportedly denied medical care.

ETHIOPIA



Eskinder Nega (m) is a prominent Ethiopian journalist who was convicted and sentenced to 18 years in prison on terrorism charges. Prior to his imprisonment, Mr. Nega published an online column criticizing the prosecution of journalists and dissidents under Ethiopia's overly-broad 2009 Anti-Terrorism Proclamation and calling for an end to politically motivated prosecutions. In the months prior to his arrest, he had also written extensively about how an Arab Spring-like democracy movement

might occur in Ethiopia.

Mr. Nega was convicted on terrorism charges on June 27, 2012 and the court sentenced him to 18 years in prison on July 13, 2012. After postponing his appeal numerous times, the Ethiopian Federal Supreme Court upheld Eskinder Nega's conviction and sentencing on May 2, 2013. One of the charges against him, "serving as a leader of a terrorist group" was dropped, but had no affect on sentencing.

In May 2012, PEN awarded him its 2012 Freedom to Write Award for his role as an advocate for freedom of the press and freedom of expression in Ethiopia. The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has found his detention illegal under international law and called for his immediate release.

INDIA



Soni Sodi (f) (adopted by Representative Donna Edwards (D-MD)) and Lingaram Kodopi (m) are Adivasi (indigenous) activists from the central Indian state of Chhattisgarh. In October 2011, she was arrested on charges of aiding Maoist rebels, who are fighting an armed insurgency against state forces across Central India. Soni Sodi has alleged that the Chhattisgarh police tortured and

sexually assaulted her while she was kept in custody. A police official reportedly forced her out of her cell, stripped her, and gave her electric shocks, causing acute pain all over her body, head, and spine. Because of this treatment, she was unable to walk to the Dantewada court on the afternoon of 10 October 2011. A hospital in Kolkata examined her on 29 November 2011 per a court order; it reported that two stones had been inserted in her vagina and one in her rectum, and that she had annular tears in her spine. She was admitted to a hospital for treatment. While she has been released from solitary confinement she still is being detained.

At the beginning of June 2013 Soni Sori was acquitted in five of the eight cases filed against her and has been granted bail in another case. Her nephew Lingaram Kodopi was acquitted in one of the two cases filed against him. In early May 2013, a trial court in Dantewada town acquitted Soni Sori, Lingaram Kodopi and 15 other persons accused of conspiring and participating in the attack against Congress leader Avadesh Gautam at Nakulnar in Chhattisgarh as the prosecution failed to establish any grounds for the charges against them. In late May, another Dantewada court granted her bail in the case in which police claim she had participated in the torching of vehicles in Nerli Ghat on 16 September 2010.

INDONESIA



Mr. Filep Karma is a human rights activist and former civil servant who was arrested in 2004 for raising the Papuan Morning Star flag during an anniversary celebration of Papuan independence from Dutch rule and sentenced to 15 years in prison.

On December 1, 2004, Mr. Karma was arrested for organizing and participating in a ceremony at Trikora Field in Abepura, Papua, to celebrate the anniversary of the 1961 Papuan declaration of independence from Dutch rule. Several hundred Papuans gathered at the ceremony, shouted “freedom,” chanted a rejection of Papua’s Special Autonomy status, and raised the Morning Star flag—a symbol of Papuan independence. When Indonesian police attempted to forcibly disband the rally, some attendees threw wood, rocks and bottles. Police responded by firing into the crowd. Mr. Karma and Mr. Yusak Pakage, another participant in the ceremony, were arrested and charged with sedition the next day. In May 2005, Mr. Karma was sentenced to 15 years in prison and Mr. Pakage to 10 years. Mr. Pakage accepted a conditional pardon and was released from prison in July 2010. Mr. Karma has refused a conditional pardon and remains a prisoner of conscience.

Mr. Karma’s health has seriously deteriorated and continues to worsen. He has suffered from prostate issues, debilitating knee and back pain, and chronic respiratory infections. (Freedom Now)

IRAN



Saeed Abedini (adopted by Representative Trent Franks (R-AZ)) is a 33-year-old father and husband from Idaho who currently is imprisoned in Evin Prison. Saeed is a dual national of the United States (via naturalization) and Iran (by birth). He has broken no codified Iranian law, but has been sentenced to eight years in prison for practicing his Christian faith. In the last year, he has been arrested, given a sham trial before a notoriously biased judge, threatened with death, beaten, and denied life-saving medical treatment.



Ayatollah Mohammad Kazemeni Boroujerdi (m) is a Shi’a cleric who advocates for the separation of religion and state and has spoken out on behalf of the rights of Iran’s religious minorities as well as those of its Shi’a Muslim majority. In October 2006, he was arrested and imprisoned without charge. He and seventeen of his followers were tried by a special court with jurisdiction over Shi’a clerics and sentenced to death on spurious charges, including “enmity against God” and spreading propaganda against the regime. After an appeal, the death sentence was withdrawn and Ayatollah Boroujerdi was sentenced to eleven years in prison. He currently is serving his prison term, and the government has banned him from practicing his clerical duties and confiscated his home and belongings. He has suffered physical and mental abuse while in prison.



Farshid Fathi (adopted by Representative Jeff Duncan (R-SC)) is a Christian pastor who ran a network of house churches in Tehran. Iranian officials arrested him on December 26, 2010. Pastor Fathi currently is serving a 6-year sentence in Iran's notorious Evin prison. Farshid left Iran to attend seminary in Turkey and then pursued additional training in London with his wife before returning to Iran. Farshid reportedly is imprisoned alongside Saeed Abedini (see above). Though his crime is being a Christian and spreading his faith, Iranian authorities have cast his Christian activity as "political offenses," arguing that his Christian activities were equivalent to "actions against national security." He also was charged with possessing religious propaganda. At trial, the regime offered as evidence that Pastor Fathi had Bibles printed in Farsi, unlawfully distributed them, and possessed Christian literature. The regime also made it difficult for his lawyers to present a defense by denying them full access to the case until just a few days before trial.

The Baha'i Seven

The Baha'i Seven are former Baha'i leaders in Iran who have been deprived of the rights accorded to prisoners under Iran's own laws and regulations. Prior to their arrests in 2008, the seven were members of an ad hoc national-level group that attended to the spiritual and social needs of Iran's Baha'i community. Ms. Sabet was detained on 5 March 2008. Her six colleagues were arrested in early morning raids on their homes on 14 May 2008.



Fariba Kamalabadi (adopted by Representative Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR)): is a developmental psychologist and mother of three who was arrested twice previously because of her involvement with the Baha'i community. On one of those occasions she was held incommunicado for 10 days. As a youth, Mrs. Kamalabadi was denied the opportunity to study at a public university. In her mid-30s, she embarked on an eight-year period of study and ultimately received an advanced degree from the Baha'i Institute of Higher Education, an alternative institution established by the Baha'i community of Iran to serve young people who were barred from university.



Jamaloddin Khanjani was a successful factory owner who, because he was Baha'i, lost his business after the 1979 Islamic revolution. Mr. Khanjani's volunteer service to his religious community included membership on the National Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of Iran in 1984, a year in which four of its nine members executed by the government. Mr. Khanjani was arrested and imprisoned at least three times before this most recent incarceration in 2008. He has four children and six grandchildren. His wife, Ashraf Sobhani, passed away on March 10, 2010 while Mr. Khanjani was still in prison.



Afif Naeimi is an industrialist who was unable to pursue his dream of becoming a doctor because as a Baha'i he was denied access to university. Born in Yazd, he lived part of his youth with relatives in Jordan after the death of his father. He was long active in volunteer Baha'i service, teaching classes for both children and adults and serving as a member of the Auxiliary Board, an appointed position with the function of inspiring, encouraging, and promoting learning among Baha'is.



Saeid Rezaie is an agricultural engineer who has run a successful farming equipment business for more than twenty years. During the early 1980's, when persecution of Baha'is was intense, he moved first to northern Iran and worked as a farming manager and then to Kerman to work as a carpenter, in part because of the difficulties Baha'is faced in finding formal employment or operating businesses. His two daughters, both in their twenties, were among a group of fifty-four young Baha'is arrested in Shiraz in 2006 while working on a project aimed at helping underprivileged young people. In 2006, before his latest incarceration in 2008, Mr. Rezaie was arrested and detained for a period that included forty days in solitary confinement.



Mahvash Sabet, 60, (adopted by Jan Schakowsky (D-IL)) is a teacher and school principal who was dismissed from public education for being a Baha'i. Before her arrest, she served for 15 years as director of the Baha'i Institute for Higher Education, which provides alternative higher education for Baha'i youth. She began her professional career as a teacher and also worked as a principal at several schools. In her professional role, she also collaborated with the National Literacy Committee of Iran. After the Islamic revolution, like thousands of other Iranian Baha'i educators, she was fired from her job and blocked from working in public education.



Behrouz Tavakkoli (m) was a social worker who lost his government job in the early 1980's because of his Baha'i belief. Prior to his most recent imprisonment, he experienced intermittent detainment and harassment and, three years ago, was jailed for four months without charge, spending most of that time in solitary confinement and developing serious kidney and orthotic problems. Mr. Tavakkoli was elected to the local Baha'i governing council in Mashhad while a student at the university there and later served on a similar council in Sari before such institutions were banned in the early 1980's.



Vahid Tizfahm (m) is an optometrist and owner of an optical shop in Tabriz, where he lived until early 2008 when he moved to Tehran. He was born and spent his youth in the city of Urumiyeh and went to Tabriz at age eighteen to study to become an optician. He later also studied sociology at the Advanced Baha'i Studies Institute, an affiliate of the Baha'i Institute for Higher Education. Since his youth, Mr. Tizfahm has served the Baha'i community in a variety of capacities – for a time as a member of the Baha'i National Youth Committee and later as part of the Auxiliary Board, an advisory group that serves to uplift and inspire Baha'i communities.

KAZAKHSTAN



Aleksandr Kharlamov is a blogger and a human rights activist. He was arrested on March 14, 2013 in Ridder (eastern Kazakhstan) and is accused of inciting religious hatred (article 164 of the criminal code) for articles posted on his blog and other social media where he discussed Christianity and the personality of Jesus. Kharlamov's blog posts discussed Jesus as a "Jewish philosopher" whose true teachings were distorted over the years by the Church's elites. For some period of time, he was forcibly detained in a psychiatric clinic. Kharlamov was informed of the investigation against him

on February 6 2013 when his office was raided and two desktop computers, a laptop and several documents were seized. According to Kharlamov and his lawyer, this accusation is a pretext for harassment. According to them, the blogger is being persecuted because of his investigative reports on local corruption, including an article on the recent conviction of a police officer.

PAKISTAN



Asia Bibi (adopted by Representative Joseph Pitts (R-PA)) is a Catholic mother of five and was a farmhand from the village of Ittan Wali in Sheikhpura District of Punjab province. In June 2009, an argument arose with her fellow labors over whether the water she brought was “unclean” because she was Christian and they Muslim. Later coworkers complained to a cleric that Bibi made derogatory comments about Prophet Muhammad. Police investigated her remarks, which resulted in her arrest and prosecution under Section 295 C of the Pakistan Penal Code for blasphemy. She spent more than a year in jail. On November 8, 2010, a district court in Nankana Sahib, Punjab, sentenced her to death for blasphemy, the first such sentence for blasphemy handed down against a woman. The death penalty is permissible under Pakistani law. According to the State Department, Bibi is waiting for her appeal to be heard at the Lahore High Court; she remains in custody. (USCIRF)

RUSSIA



Maria Alekhina (f) and Nadezhda Tolokonnikova (f) are members of the feminist punk-rock collective known as Pussy Riot. They were arrested after performing a protest song in Moscow’s Christ the Saviour cathedral in which they called on the Virgin Mary to become a feminist and banish Putin. They were convicted of “hooliganism, pre-planned and committed by a group of people on grounds of religious hatred” and sentenced to two years at a penal camp. One member of Pussy Riot, Ekaterina Samutsevich, has been released. The police have issued a statement that two other members of Pussy Riot, who also participated in the February action, are on the “wanted list” and there is a separate criminal case against them.



Mikhail Khodorkovsky is former head of the Russian oil company YUKOS, Russia’s richest oil company. He and his associate, **Platon Lebedev**, were convicted of embezzlement and money-laundering in December 2010. He was arrested on October 25 2003 to appear before investigators as a witness, but within hours of being taken into custody he was charged with fraud. He was sentenced to fourteen years in prison, which includes a previous sentence for tax evasion and fraud he received in 2005. Observers have raised concerns about the timing of the charges, the harassment of lawyers and witnesses and procedural violations including the exclusion of evidence that might have exonerated the defendants, and the denial of the right to examine and cross examine witnesses. His treatment, and that of Platon Lebedev (see below) suggest that his conviction was for political reasons relating to who he is.



Platon Lebedev is former CEO of Group Menatep, a company created by Mikhail Khodorkovsky that had controlling shares in the Russian oil company YUKOS, Russia's richest oil company. He, along with Khodorkovsky, was convicted for embezzlement and money-laundering in December 2010. Lebedev played an integral role making YUKOS a world-class company defined by international standards of transparency and corporate governance. Many view his arrest as the beginning of the systematic campaign against YUKOS. He, along with Khodorkovsky, was sentenced to fourteen years in prison, which includes a previous sentence for tax evasion and fraud they received in 2005. On 7 August 2012, Lebedev's sentence was reduced by 3 years and 4 months by a district court judge in the Arkhangelsk region city of Velsk, where he is imprisoned. Like Khodorkovsky, observers have raised concerns about the harassment of lawyers and witnesses and procedural violations including the exclusion of evidence that might have exonerated the defendants, and the denial of the right to examine and cross examine witnesses. His treatment, and that of Mikhail Khodorkovsky (see above) suggest that his conviction was for political reasons relating to who he is.

RWANDA



Ms. Agnes Uwimana Nkusi is an editor with the independent Kinyarwanda-language newspaper Umurabyo, in Rwanda. Rwandan authorities arrested her in July 2010 after Ms. Uwimana published articles written by Ms. Saidati Mukakibibi that were critical of the Rwandan government and President Paul Kagame. Ms. Uwimana and Ms. Mukakibibi were charged under the country's genocide ideology and sectarianism laws which have been increasingly used to silence government critics in recent years.

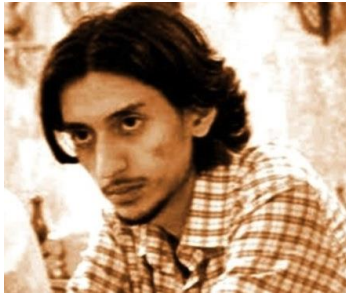
The Rwandan High Court charged Ms. Uwimana with endangering national security, genocide denial, defamation of the President, and divisionism. On February 4, 2011, the High Court sentenced Ms. Uwimana to 17 years in prison.

On April 5, 2012, the Supreme Court of Rwanda cleared Ms. Uwimana on the charges of genocide denial and divisionism. However, the Court upheld her convictions for defamation and endangering national security. Ms. Uwimana's sentence was reduced from 17 years to four years in prison. Agnes Uwimanan Nkusi remains imprisoned.

SAUDI ARABIA



Khaled al-Johani was released from prison on August 8, 2012.



Hamza Kashgari, Saudi writer and blogger (adopted by Representative Jim Moran (D-VA)): In February 2012, after receiving numerous death threats, Hamza Kashgari, a 23-year old Saudi blogger, fled from Saudi Arabia to Malaysia amid possible apostasy and blasphemy charges for comments deemed as insulting the Prophet Mohammad that he posted on Twitter. After a few days, Malaysian authorities deported him back to Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia's highest official clerics have declared Kashgari guilty of apostasy based on his now-deleted tweets and called for him to be put to death. He remains in detention in Jeddah awaiting formal

charges and a trial. (USCIRF)

SYRIA



Mazen Darwish (m) is a Syrian lawyer, regarded as one of the country's most prominent activists and advocates of free speech. He is the president of the Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression (CMFE), which has to operate in secret because of prohibition by the Syrian government. Having already been arrested back in April 2008 and imprisoned for 10 days after reporting on riots near Damascus, he was then was arrested in February 2012. He's being held along with 15 other journalists but has not been charged with any offence. There has been no news from him since his arrest. In 2012, Darwish was honoured as the Reporters Without Borders Journalist of the Year, for his tireless efforts for freedom of expression in Syria.

TURKMENISTAN



Gulgeldy Annaniyazov is a political dissident and human rights activist who has been detained in Turkmenistan since 2008, when he returned to the country after six years in Norway as a political refugee. On July 12, 1995, Mr. Annaniyazov organized the first ever anti-government demonstration in Ashgabat. The Turkmen government responded to his peaceful demonstration by sentencing him to 15 years in prison. Mr. Annaniyazov was released under a presidential amnesty in January 1999. After his release, Mr. Annaniyazov received refugee status in Norway in 2002.

On June 24, 2008, Mr. Annaniyazov returned to Turkmenistan after a change in the country's leadership to work for democratic reform. That evening while visiting with friends and family at his parents' home, plain-clothed officers entered the house without presenting any identification or warrant and arrested Mr. Annaniyazov. The officers did not disclose where they were taking Mr. Annaniyazov. It has been reported that Mr. Annaniyazov was charged with illegal entry into Turkmenistan and that his trial took place in July 2008. On October 7, 2008, he was sentenced to 11 years in prison. The Turkmen government reportedly brought additional charges against him in connection with the anti-government demonstration he organized in July 1995. It has also been reported that these charges have increased the length of Mr. Annaniyazov's prison term.

He was not represented by an attorney and all of the hearings were closed to the public. The court has also refused to provide Mr. Annaniyazov's family with a copy of the sentence, leaving them without any specific information about his conviction or where he is imprisoned.

UZBEKISTAN



Gaybullo Jalilov is a human rights defender sentenced to more than 11 years in prison on religious extremism charges. Before his arrest, Mr. Jalilov was a member of the Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan, where his work focused on government violations of religious freedom, and in particular, on the persecution of independent Muslims in Uzbekistan. At the time of his arrest, he reportedly had collected information on over 200 arrests of independent Uzbek Muslims.

On September 5, 2009, Mr. Jalilov was forced into a vehicle by several men and held incommunicado for nearly three weeks before his father received written notification that criminal charges were being brought against him. Authorities charged Mr. Jalilov and three other men with anti-constitutional activity, distribution of materials that threatened public security, and membership in a banned religious organization. During the trial, Mr. Jalilov testified that he had been coerced into signing a confession and that he was innocent on all counts. Authorities relocated hearings without notifying Mr. Jalilov's attorney or family. In a closed hearing on January 18, 2010, Mr. Jalilov was found guilty and sentenced to nine years in prison.

New charges were brought against Mr. Jalilov in August 2010 based on witness statements that Mr. Jalilov had actively participated in religious gatherings, and that during these gatherings, he had taken part in religious studies and watched DVDs that contained religious extremist content. None of these witnesses appeared in court. On August 4, in a closed hearing, Mr. Jalilov was sentenced to an additional two years' imprisonment, extending his sentence to more than 11 years.

Mr. Jalilov is detained in a prison in Zangiyota district where he has suffered repeated ill-treatment. He has been beaten so severely that he is nearly deaf in both ears. Mr. Jalilov also suffers from a lung condition, which causes him to have serious difficulty breathing, and a vertebral hernia. His family has had difficulty visiting him in prison and fears he is in need of urgent medical care.



Hairulla Khamidov (m), a young Uzbek Muslim journalist, was arrested in Tashkent and charged with membership in an alleged extremist group. A police search of his home found recordings of sermons by the independent Muslim clerics. Many believe that Khamidov was targeted because of his popular religious program on a private radio station. In May 2010, Khamidov received a six-year prison camp sentence.

Mehriniso Hamdamova (f), Zulkhumor Hamdamova (f), and Shahlo Rakhmonova (f) were convicted in April 2010 on criminal charges of threatening the constitutional order, public security, and public order because they had conducted private religious instruction of girls. Mehriniso Hamdamova, a teacher at an officially approved women's religion course at Karshi's Kuk Gumbaz Mosque, was sentenced to seven years in a prison camp; her sister Zulkhumor Hamdamova, and their relative Shahlo Rakhmonova, each received six-and-a-half-year terms.



[Akzam Turgunov](#), 61, is an Uzbek human rights activist and political opposition leader who has been detained in Uzbekistan since 2008 on extortion charges. Mr. Turgunov founded and served as Chairman of Mazlum (“The Oppressed”), a human rights organization in Tashkent that advocates on behalf of prisoners of conscience and protests against the use of torture. He also served as Director of the Tashkent section of Erk (“Freedom”), a political opposition party.

Mr. Turgunov was arrested in the town of Manget on July 11, 2008 by the very police department he was investigating for corruption. The charges appear fabricated to conceal a political motive for imprisonment. Following his arrest, the Uzbek officials searched Mr. Turgunov’s home in Tashkent, where they seized political materials. They then held Mr. Turgunov incommunicado for 18 days, during which time an officer reportedly poured boiling water down his back, causing him to lose consciousness and suffer severe burns. Though Mr. Turgunov revealed his burn marks in open court, the judge accepted as fact statements made by police that they had not tortured him. During the trial, the judge denied Mr. Turgunov and his attorney an opportunity to examine the evidence against him or to cross-examine the government’s witness against him.

On October 10, 2008, the court sentenced Mr. Turgunov to 10 years’ imprisonment. The Board of Appeals of the Karakalpakstan Supreme Court affirmed his sentence on December 11, 2008, after a 15-minute hearing. Mr. Turgunov is currently detained at a work camp in the city of Karshi.

VIETNAM



[Doan Huy Chuong, Do Thi Minh Hanh, and Nguyen Daon Quoc Hung](#) are labor activists who were charged with disrupting national security and sentenced to between seven and nine years in prison for organizing workers at a Vietnamese shoe factory in 2010.

Government authorities arrested Doan, Do, and Nguyen in early 2010 shortly after they helped organize workers at the My Phong shoe factory in Vietnam, where they distributed a leaflet outlining the striking workers’ demands. Authorities held the three organizers for eight months before charging them with threatening national security. On October 28, 2010, 10 days after their indictment, the People’s Court of Tra Vinh convicted them and sentenced Doan and Do to seven years in prison and Nguyen to nine years in prison. The organizers were not permitted legal counsel or the opportunity to speak in their own defense. Although they were allowed a lawyer on appeal, the sentence was affirmed by the same court after another closed proceeding.

Throughout their detentions, Doan, Do, and Nguyen have been subjected to serious mistreatment. After arresting the three organizers, the government held them in solitary confinement for months. They have been the victims of repeated beatings, which often occur after one of their frequent prison transfers. As a result, Doan has lost the use of one hand and Do is deaf in one ear. Despite continued poor health—including rashes and liver problems—all three are forced to endure hard labor. (Freedom Now)



Nguyen Tien Trung (born 1983 – adopted by Representative Alan Lowenthal (D-CA)) is a Vietnamese blogger and activist who was arrested in July 2009 on charges of disseminating “propaganda against the socialist state” and “organization to attempt to overthrow the people’s government”. After a show trial in January 2010, that lasted just one day, he was sentenced to seven years in jail and 3 years’ probation, and is currently in prison in Ho Chi Minh City. Trung has a Masters in I.T from France’s Institut National des Sciences

Appliquees de Rennes, and during his time there, wrote an open letter to Vietnam's Education Minister, demanding reforms to the country's highly politicized education system. In May 2006, he founded Viet Youth for Democracy, which called on world leaders to remind the Vietnamese government of its commitment to human rights. Trung is also Vice General Secretary of the Democratic Party of Vietnam, a peaceful group not recognized by the one party regime. (RWB)



Tran Huynh Duy Thuc (born 1966) is a Vietnamese blogger, entrepreneur and businessman, who was arrested in May 2009, and is currently serving a 16 year prison sentence. He was initially charged with theft of a telecommunications device, but the authorities were unable to find any evidence for this, and later charged Tran with “promoting anti-Socialist, anti-government propaganda” and undertaking “activities aimed at subverting the people’s government”. He was jailed, along with three other democracy activists, after a trial lasting just one day; his

sentence is the longest ever handed down to a dissident in Vietnam. Tran is the founder and CEO of One-Connection Internet, an Internet service provider, and the author of several dissident blogs and articles on Vietnam's economy. (RWB)



Nguyen Van Lia (m) is a scholar in Hoa Hao Buddhism, a sect repressed by the Vietnamese authorities. According to state media, he possessed printed materials, CD's, and DVD's criticizing the Vietnamese government's religious record. He had previously met in Saigon with the U.S. Consulate and the U.S. CIRF. He was sentenced to a five-year term on 13 December 2011 on the charge of “abusing democratic freedoms.”



Tran Hoai An is a religious-freedom advocate and a member of the Hoa Hao Buddhist church, a sect which has been repressed by Vietnamese authorities. According to state media, he was arrested for possessing printed materials, CD's, and DVD's criticizing the government's religious policies. He was sentenced to a three-year term on 13 December 2011 on the charge of “abusing democratic freedoms.”



Nguyen Trung Ton is a leader of a Pentecostal house church. Due to his evangelical work and advocacy for dispossessed farmers, Pastor Nguyen Trung Ton has often been harassed and beaten by security police. He is a signatory of the Bloc 8406 Democracy Movement manifesto. On 29 December 2011, he was sentenced to a two-year prison term to be followed by a two-year period of house arrest. The charge was “propaganda against the socialist state.”



Cu Huy Ha Vu is a prominent government critic and human-rights lawyer. He filed unprecedented lawsuits against the government, including suing Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung for violating laws on environmental protection, national security, and cultural heritage by approving a Chinese-

run bauxite mining project in the Central Highlands. His law firm provided legal assistance to democracy activists and, prior to his arrest, to six Catholics from Con Dau parish who had protested government confiscation of Church properties. He was arrested on 5 November 2010, and on 4 April 2011 sentenced to seven-years in prison to be followed by three-years of house arrest. The charge was “propaganda against the socialist state.”



Pastor Duong Kim Khai Duong is a pastor for the Mennonite Church in Vietnam, a long-time advocate for aggrieved farmers, a democracy activist, and member of, Viet Tan, an organization advocating for democracy. Since the early 1990’s, he has been detained or arrested thirteen times, often while trying to organize prayer sessions. He was jailed in 2004 for starting an “illegal” religious group. Upon his release in 2006, he founded the Mennonite Cattle Shed Congregation in order to advocate for religious freedom and social justice, particularly to provide assistance to farmers so they could petition the government for redress in land disputes or corruption cases in Ben Tre and Dong Thap provinces. He also joined Viet Tan during this period. Pastor Duong Kim Khai was arrested on 10 August 2010 on the charge of “attempting to overthrow the government.” The condition of his health and place of detention were kept from his family by authorities until 12 October 2010, when it received written confirmation of his arrest. On 30 May 2011, he was sentenced to a six-year prison term (later reduced to five years) followed by five-year term of house arrest. In 2011, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention ruled that the Hanoi government’s detention and conviction of Pastor Duong Kim Khai and six other land activists were in violation of international law.



Paulus Le Son is a community organizer and prominent writer for *Vietnam Redemptorist News*. A resident of Hanoi, he is an active community organizer for issues such as HIV and public education; he also serves as member of the John Paul II Group for Pro-Life. His popular personal blog covers issues of social justice, human rights, and sovereignty. He was arrested on 3 August 2011 on the charge of “attempting to overthrow the government.” His arrest was part of larger crackdown on human-rights defenders; seventeen others were arrested, mostly from Vinh Province.



Father Nguyen Van Ly (adopted by Representative Chris Smith (R-NJ)). He has spent over 15 years in prison for the causes of religious freedom, democracy, and human rights. Initially arrested in September 1977 and sentenced to 20 years in a labor camp near Hue, he was later released but prohibited from engaging in religious activities. He was returned to jail in 2001 when he submitted testimony to the U.S. Congress and the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom opposing a U.S.-Vietnam Bilateral Trade Act. On March 30, 2007, in a broadcasted show trial, authorities muzzled him while he tried to defend himself. He is a one of the founders of Bloc 8406 and past editor of an underground publication. (USCIRF)

Details: **Age:** May 14, 1946; **Activity:** Catholic priest; **Date of arrest:** February 19, 2007; **Sentence:** Sentenced to 8 years imprisonment on March 30, 2007; released on medical parole on March 15, 2010 and re-jailed on July 25, 2011; **Charge:** Propaganda against the socialist state (Article 88); **Current location:** K1 Prison Camp, Ha Nam Province.